

Mere Man

Story of the Wooing of the Fair Miss Mae Pope.

By FANNIE HURST

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With exquisite precision Miss Mae Pope—Mae, please—fastened a yellow silk scarf, fringe edged, over one corner of the parlor mantelpiece. A bisque shepherd fastened the drape in place and smiled down the length of his shelf at a bisque shepherd lass who leaned across a bisque railing and returned the identical smile.

Between the two a gilt framed photograph of Miss Mae Pope, taken at the age of fifteen, held center place. Accurately posed in a white frock and communion veil, her figure was the erect result of a rigid vertebra and a photographer's brace.

Miss Pope took up the gilt frame, breathed upon its face, polished the glass protection and replaced it upon its lace mat.

"Maw," she called, "ain't you done with them supper dishes yet?"

Almost immediately Mrs. Pope appeared between the portieres, wiping her moist pink hands on a towel.

"Say, what do you think this here is, the Waldorf-Astoria? If you're in such a hurry why don't you come out and cut your own ham and slice your own bread?"

"Fer land's sake, maw, I ain't deaf!" "The sandwiches is ready," she retorted irrelevantly enough, "and the glasses and root beer is on the tray. In my day gurls didn't set up to their young men this way."

"When I keep company with a gentleman friend like Mr. Sarpy you ain't got no kick coming."

"I ain't sayin' nothin' 'til I've seen him. Men are a deceivin' lot. You can't tell nothin' about 'em."

"Ain't I told you three times, maw, that he's been in the gents' furnishing four months? Virginia Tompkins used to know him when he was in the white goods over at Tracy's. He's the goods all right."

"Huh!" said Mrs. Pope.

"He ain't set up to another girl on the floor but me?"

"That fer all you know."

"If it wasn't that I was put over on the book sale, I never would have seen him. He's the smart kind, he is. There ain't a noon hour he don't come over to the books and read around."

"Then what's he settin' up to you fer?" Mrs. Pope sniffed suspiciously. "You ain't nothin' in the book line."

"I can't keep a fellow from getting stuck on me, can I?" Miss Pope lowered her eyes.

"Sixty-seven dollars ain't bad money," assented the mother.

"Sixty-seven fifty," corrected her daughter.

"Just gimme one look at him an' I'll know more about him 'n you an' Virginia Tompkins together."

"Fer lands sake, maw, don't fergit what to say when I make you acquainted."

Mrs. Pope glanced at her daughter with intent to wither. "I knew man-



MR. SARPY BOWED TO A CAREFUL ANGLE before you was born," she replied.

"Maw"—Miss Pope bent forward on the divan, the dawn of an inspiration flushed her face—"where's them books Effie's boss gave her after the Sixth avenue store fire?"

"Out proppin' up the kitchen table leg so it won't wobble. Watcher-want?"

A flash of red kimono and Miss Pope disappeared. Almost immediately she returned with three small volumes in the curve of her arm, a yellow and slightly damaged by fire copy of Owen Meredith's "Lucille," an old edition of "Thelma," and a brown bound "Autocrat of the Breakfast Table." She stacked them symmetrically on the center table.

"These books look fine," she cried. A clock struck the half hour.

"Looky," cried Miss Pope, "it's time to dress."

"Be sure and sing fer him, Mae."

"If I don't hurry and get dressed I'll look like a rag. I will."

Two hours later Miss Pope reappeared through the bead portieres. There was a pink spot on each cheek and a pecky pink bow in her hair and at her throat. Her brief sleeves terminated at the elbows in pink rosettes.

Mr. Sarpy rose from his three legged chair in great haste and much embarrassment.

"Good evening, Miss Pope."

His hair fitted his head like a yellow oilskin cap, and his complexion was correspondingly fair. When Mr. Sarpy shaved it was as mainly pastime rather than hirsute necessity.

"How d'y'e do, Mr. Sarpy?"

They shook hands.

"Ain't this a pleasant evenin'?"

"It is that," agreed Mr. Sarpy.

Miss Pope smoothed her white dress until it clung to her like an ephod of grace and crossed her feet daintily.

Her companion let his hands hang over his knees and busied himself yanking his neck about his small tall collar.

"I didn't see you when I left the store, Mr. Sarpy."

"Indeed, I was in the vicinity of the shirts all day."

"By the way, you ain't never met maw, have you?"

"Beg pardon?"

"I say, you ain't never met maw, have you?"

"No, no, I never had the pleasure."

Mr. Sarpy's neck darted uneasily again.

"Well, what-a you know about that, and I been talkin' about you ever since I got the book shift! I'll call her this minute."

Mr. Sarpy half raised himself from the divan.

"Please don't let me disturb"—he began, but Miss Pope had pronounced, light as breeze, between the portieres that pattered like rain.

"Oh, maw!" Her voice came back to him like a bell. "Oh, maw, dear, would you stop readin' long enough to step into the parlor and meet Mr. Sarpy?"

Mrs. Pope laid aside a large woolen arrangement she was knitting and rose stiffly from her chair. Her spotted silk dress rustled.

In that brief moment Miss Pope straightened the maternal neckband, whispered a final admonition in her mother's very red ear and danced back into the parlor.

"Ma'll be here in just a minute, Mr. Sarpy. She's always readin'!"

Presently Mrs. Pope hove in. She rattled when she walked, and after you had regarded her for a bit the large white spots on her black gown began to magnify and rotate until the gift of sight became a curse.

"Maw, I want to make you acquainted with my friend Mr. Sarpy."

"Pleased to meet you, maw." Mr. Sarpy bowed to a careful angle.

"Pleased to meet you, sir. Nice weather, ain't it?"

"It is that," carefully reseating himself.

"Mae says you work at the Biggest store too."

"Yes, maw; I'm in the aisle adjoining to the books."

"Well, well, so books is your special line."

"No'm," Mr. Sarpy spoke with some reluctance. "I'm in the gents' furnishing—next aisle to the books."

"So gents' furnishin' is your particular line?"

"No, maw; I have been in the hardware and in the white goods."

"Mae, why don't you sing fer your friend? She ain't got a bad singin' voice when she's in practice."

With her forefinger Mae traced a pattern on the brocade.

"Aw, maw," she remonstrated and glanced out of one eye at Mr. Sarpy.

"I'd be pleased to hear you sing, Miss Pope."

"And me with such a cold!" But she spread herself over the piano stool and cast her eyes in modest fashion at a remote angle of the ceiling.

After a long and fervent crescendo the performer swung lightly around on her stool.

"You play just grand," said Mr. Sarpy.

"Oh, you jollier, and me with such a cold!"

"Maybe Mr. Sarpy would like some refreshments, Mae."

The root beer and sandwiches were served. Mr. Sarpy partook with dignity and reserve.

"Do have another sandwich, Mr. Sarpy."

"No, thank you." He placed his glass on the mantelpiece and flicked his lips with his handkerchief. Miss Pope coughed twice behind her hand, and her mother rose.

"I guess I'll be saying good night, Mr. Sarpy. Us old folks ain't so spry on our legs as you young ones."

Miss Pope blushed.

"Good night, Mrs. Pope. I'm pleased that I met you."

"Same to you," said Mrs. Pope, closing the folding doors behind her.

He bowed her out. Miss Pope remained at the center table, ruffling the leaves of a book idly through her fingers. Mr. Sarpy returned to her side.

"Your mother's a pleasant, intelligent lady."

"We think she's nice," she replied archly.

He took the book gently from her hand.

"What are you reading?" He held it sideways and read the title, his face brightening.

"Lucille." Oh, Miss Pope, are you fond of 'Lucille' too?"

"I just love it. She's my favorite."

They talked in subdued tones, and after awhile he wandered over to the hearth, took the gilt framed photograph from off the mantelpiece and regarded it thoughtfully.

"That old thing!" she objected.

"That old thing's six years old!"

"It's just beautiful," he said softly.

"Now, you stop your jollying!"

Mr. Sarpy, in whose blood ran the corpuscles of philosophy, studied the picture with a thoughtful pucker between his eyes.

"From the child to the woman; from the communion veil to the wedding veil."

There was a crucial pause.

"You got such a poetical way about you," she whispered.

He moved nearer, and their faces, startled and flushed, were reflected in the mirror.

"Guess what I'm thinking?" he asked.

"Oh, you!" she gasped, with a telepathy that would have roused science.

"You're just my style of a girl, Miss Pope. If I do say it myself, I'm not like most fellows, that want a girl to be pretty and nothing else. I like them to know about books and things. That's what I say."

"I've always been that a-way," she confessed.

"You aren't like other girls," the perennial phrase fell fresh from his lips.

"If I thought you meant it."

"I do." His hand worked open her



"IT'S JUST BEAUTIFUL," HE SAID SOFTLY.

pilant fingers, and his knuckles rested against her palm.

"Maw! You're named after the fairest month in the year."

She giggled and turned her reddening face from him.

"Oh, Mr. Sarpy?"

His knuckles pressed her closer.

"Divinely tall and most divinely fair!" he quoted.

He could see the color creep higher into her face.

"Will you be mine, little one?" he whispered in a tone that qualified him for juvenile roles in a stock company.

For some inexplicable reason, known only to her sex and kind, Miss Pope's eyes were suddenly blurred with tears. He took his watery cue and in the most unapproved fashion kissed her smackingly on the lips.

"That seals our love, honey. That means we're engaged," and her blond head nodded on his shoulder.

"Isn't it great, Mae?" he whispered to the rear of her coiffure.

"Mr. Sarpy—Gus!" she breathed.

He made her repeat the glorified name, and then he kissed again the lips that had baled it.

They sat on the divan, and he smoothed her hand.

"I'm for a June wedding," said he, "when nature is in bloom, and there is Coney and the park for Sundays."

"June! Gus, that's only two months off."

"Months on leaden wings," as the poet says.

"We ain't so bad off on \$67.50, are we, Gus?"

"Not a tall, dear, not at all."

"There's a swell three rooms in Annie's building over on Second Avenue—stationary washtubs and \$21."

"That is not bad, Mae." His eyes were shining.

"Annie's got a dandy dining room set, golden oak and round table, \$10 down."

When he finally rose to depart, the elevated had long ceased to roar, save at intervals. The stillness broke upon them suddenly.

"I didn't mean to stay so late," he pleaded.

They lingered over the moment, of their farewell.

"You'll give notice next week that you're quitting, dearie?"

"Yes," she murmured into his coat-sleeve. "I gotta to begin to get ready."

"Goodbye, Mae—take good care of yourself."

"I'll see you in the morning," she said half tearfully.

She stood in the open doorway listening to his retreating footsteps click-click down one, two, three, four flights of fireproof stairs.

Then she closed the door softly, holding the knob to save the squeak, and tiptoed across the room to lower the shade.

At the window she paused a moment. The silence fairly buzzed in her ears. As she looked out her lips parted.

"I wonder," she was thinking, "how much Annie's green carpet cost."

EAST CHARLESTON

The students from Derby academy have returned to their studies.

Vinnie Allbee of Island Pond was a guest at Ed. Crow's last week.

Mrs. E. W. Buck is spending a few days with relatives in Stanstead.

Mrs. Curtis and son, Raymond, visited relatives in Island Pond last week.

Ione Fellows of Derby is spending a few days with her sister, Mrs. Joseph Canning.

Topic for C. E. prayer meeting Jan. 6, "What is Consecration?" Leader, Mrs. A. Hall.

Mildred Fox of Barnston, P. Q., is spending the holidays with her father at Echo Inn.

Will Cargill is working for A. C. Gallup and will soon move into Joseph Canning's house.

William Moulton, who has been visiting relatives in Oklahoma for several weeks, has returned home.

Mr. and Mrs. Ed. Hastings and daughter, Iida, were guests of Mrs. Archer and other relatives in town last week.

Emily, Bernice and Homer Keeler of East Stanstead spent several days with their sister, Mrs. Harry Kezar, last week.

Rev. Thomas Hall preached at Plymouth church Sunday. Owing to the bad weather the meetings were not very well attended.

Roy Archer and Bion Stevens start this week on business trip to California. They expect to be gone several months and tour the state.

The people of this place were shocked by the death of James Francis Morrill, which occurred Wednesday morning, Dec. 15, at the home of his son, Homer, although he had been in poor health several years, the end came very suddenly. He was born in Danville Jan. 7, 1832, son of Cyrus and Sally (Kelsey) Morrill. In childhood he moved with his parents to Derby to the farm in more recent years known as the Henry Wooley farm, and was married in Derby Nov. 1862, to Augusta Emma Sawyer, who died eight years ago. Five children, Homer and Mrs. May Taylor of this place, Herbert of New York, Mrs. Eugene Alexander of West Derby and Mrs. Harrison Johnson of West Charleston, 14 grandchildren and four great grandchildren and one brother in Wisconsin are left to mourn his loss. About 40 years ago he moved from Derby to the farm in East Charleston, which in later years he sold to his son, Homer. He was a good father, a diligent farmer and honest in all his dealings, a strong advocate of the right in all things and will be missed by many. Funeral was held at his late home, Rev. Barnard of Island Pond officiating, and interment was at Hillside cemetery, East Charleston.

COVENTRY

Henry Wells has returned to Richmond.

Mrs. Florence Trudeau is not as well again.

The Nichols place is advertised at auction Saturday.

Miss Marion Chaffee had a new piano as a Christmas gift from her parents.

The annual business meeting and roll call of the Cong. church will be held Jan. 12.

Mr. and Mrs. Frank Gray, Mrs. Claude Whittemore and little son of Orleans spent New Year's day at H. H. Hancock's.

(Intended for last week)

The new schoolhouse is completed. Those who have visited it have nothing but words of praise. The state school house inspector when here recently, stated that some were larger but there was none better in the state.

Wife's Limitations. Don't expect your wife to know where all the things are which you leave lying about. Remember, she does not possess second sight, though there are many times when she needs it.

The Sardonic Smile. The expression "sardonic smile" is as old as Homer. It means literally to "grin like a dog" and bears reference to the hideous contortion of the facial muscles produced by eating the sardonian, a plant of Sicily, which was said to screw up the face of the eater, giving it a horrible appearance. Mahan, in his history of England, says: "The island of Sardinia, consisting chiefly of marshes or of mountains, has from the earliest period to the present been cursed with a noxious air, an ill cultivated soil and a scanty population. The convulsions produced by its poisonous plants gave rise to the expression of 'sardonic smile,' which is as old as Homer."

WORDS OF WISDOM.

Reputations, like beavers and cloaks, shall last some people twice the time of others.—Douglas Jerrold.

Dare to look up to God and say, Deal with me in the future as thou wilt: I am of the same mind as thou art: I am thin; I refuse nothing that pleases thee: lead me where thou wilt: clothe me in any dress thou chooseth.—Epictetus.

Every tub must stand upon its own bottom.—Bunyon.

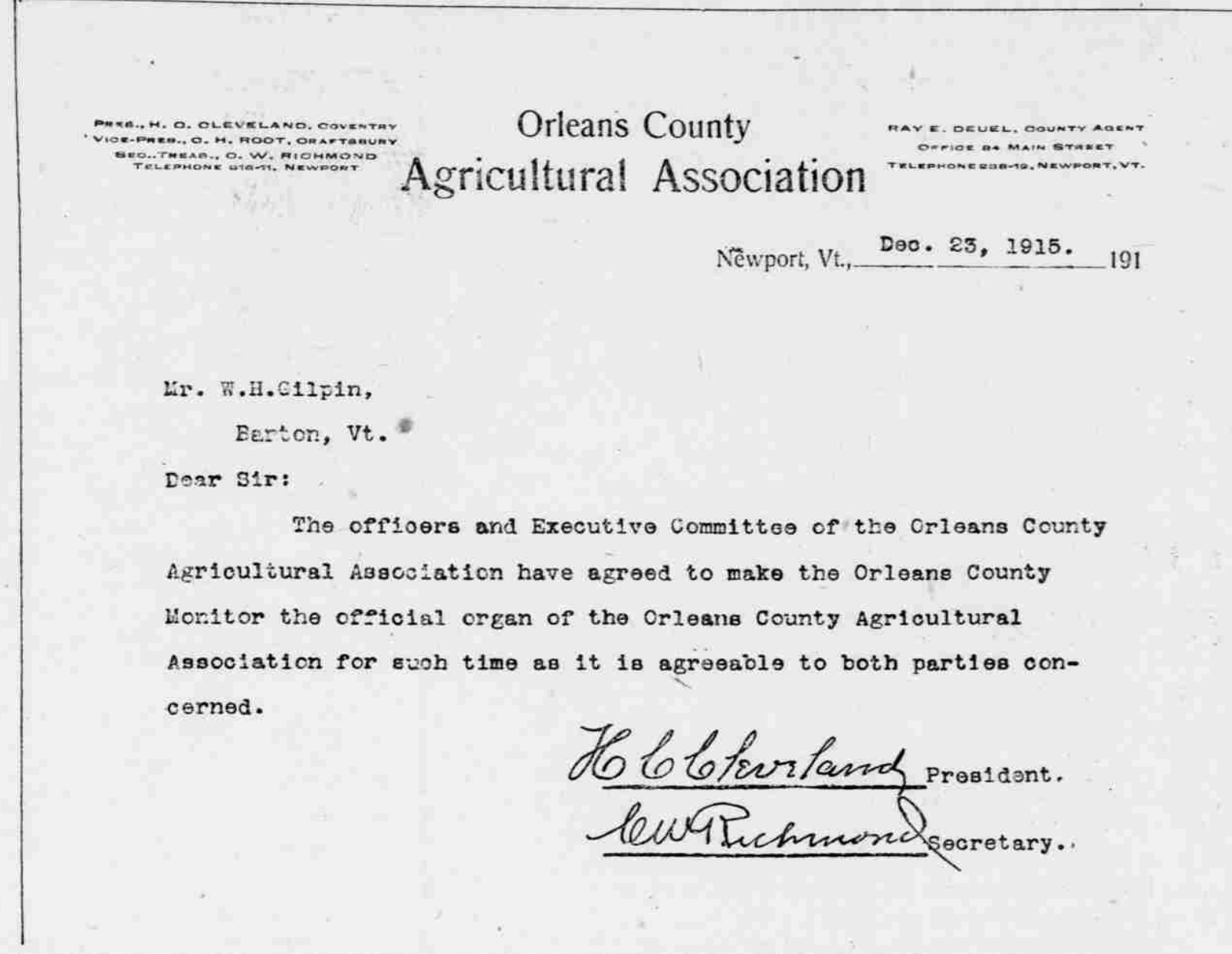
One of the grandest things in having rights is that, being your rights, you may give them up.—George MacDonald.

Reputation is an idle and most false imposition; oft got without merit and lost without deserving.—Shakespeare.

Monitor Made the Official Paper of County Agricultural Association

For some time past the officers of the Orleans County Agricultural Association have been considering the publication of a paper or magazine to contain their official proceedings, news events, results of experiments, records of cow testing, special articles, etc. Other county associations in the state are issuing such publications.

The editor of this paper proposed to the officers of the association that arrangements be made with a local paper for the publication of such material. After due consideration it was agreed that the Monitor be made such official paper and the following letter was received.



Among the benefits of making an established paper the official publication of the association are the following:

1. The association will assume less financial burden than by publishing a periodical of its own.
2. Members of the association, who are already subscribers to the Monitor, will be required to make no additional outlay in order to receive the official proceedings of his organization.
3. Members who are not subscribers to the Monitor may obtain the issues containing official news of the association at the price it was proposed to charge for a special publication, containing only association matter.
4. The value of the association will be widened and the information it has to dispense will be given greater circulation and publicity than in any other manner.
5. Advertisers who would have patronized the special paper will receive much greater circulation and value for their expenditures in the special Monitor issues.

It is expected the next issue of the Monitor will be the first paper containing a department devoted to the association, and one issue in each month is expected to be used as the official paper. Association members, or others, who desire to have the monthly issue of the Monitor, containing this matter, may have it at the rate of 50c per year. Let us make it plain. For 50c per year one becomes a subscriber only for such monthly issues of the Monitor as contain the official reports, articles and news of the Orleans County Agricultural Association.

WESTFIELD

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practice and has endeared himself to many by his kindness. He is a trustee of the town library and a trustee of the Hitchcock fund. In 1910 he was elected a member of the General Assembly from this town without opposition which is very unusual. The town has given him everything he desired. His wife and children are active in church work, in social affairs and in movements for the moral uplift of the community. Dr. Young and family will be missed greatly.

HOLLAND

Ralph Smith is on the sick list.

Glady Batchelder is visiting her father.

Hazel Derusha of Derby visited in town recently.

Leon Cheney is visiting his aunt, Mrs. E. Batchelder.

Mrs. Stratton's father, from Fitch Bay, P. Q., is visiting her.

Ruth Hall has returned from a four months' stay in Fitchburg, Mass.

Mrs. William Baldwin and son visited her brother, E. A. Ferrin, the past week.

The Carleton recital at the church given by the "Faithful Few" was well attended.

The Grange sent carnations to one of its members, Mrs. Frank Fauwaw, on New Year's day.

Sidney Bennett, who is working in St. Johnsbury, was at home recently for a short visit.

Holland Camp, 12,137, will go to Derby Center Thursday evening to install the officers in their camp.

The teachers, Kate Ferrin, Shirley Hall and Edna Sykes, have returned to their schools after a week's vacation.

The Winning class met New Year's day with their teacher, Miss Jennie Lackey. Refreshments were served and a pleasant time was enjoyed by all.

MORGAN CENTER

(Intended for last week)

Mr. and Mrs. D. W. Scribner of this place, who on account of Mr. Scribner's health are spending the winter in East Pembroke, Mass., were much surprised and greatly pleased with the card shower given them Dec. 19, that date being Mr. Scribner's birthday, also their wedding anniversary. They express their thanks to the large number of friends who so kindly remembered them.

Chinese National Color. For talismanic purposes red is indispensable in China. It is interwoven with the pigtail, and must form a part of children's clothing. Written charms must also be in red ink on yellow paper to be efficacious against the multitudinous ill omens and evil spirits which seem to surround the Chinaman, and for this reason all imperial decrees are written in vermilion.

Mackinaw Coats

FOR MEN AND BOYS